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**Proposed Bill No. 5114**

**Proposed Bill No. 5078**

**Proposed Bill No. 5331**

**Testimony concerning Proposed Bill No. 5114 and Proposed Bill No. 5078:**

We are writing to you today to state our reasons why Connecticut should not only impose a moratorium on the Common Core State Standards, but should drop them entirely and return the control of curriculum development back to local school boards. As we are sure you have heard by now, the CCSS are not developmentally appropriate and have and will continue to cause undue stress on our youngest, most vulnerable students. Many child development experts, including Dr. Carla Horowitz have stated facts regarding the standards and the “suffering” it will cause.

Over 500 early childhood health and education professionals signed the Joint Statement of Early Childhood Health and Education Professionals which listed its grave concerns regarding the implementation of the common core. These concerns include long hours of instruction, inappropriate standardized assessments, testing taking away from time for more important learning to help students become responsible citizens, all with little evidence that the standards lead to later success.

“The statement’s four main arguments, below, are grounded in what we know about child development—facts that all education policymakers need to be aware of:

1. The K-3 standards will lead to long hours of direct instruction in literacy and math. This kind of “drill and grill” teaching has already pushed active, play-based learning out of many kindergartens.
2. The standards will intensify the push for more standardized testing, which is highly unreliable for children under age eight.
3. Didactic instruction and testing will crowd out other crucial areas of young children’s learning: active, hands-on exploration, and developing social, emotional, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills—all of which are difficult to standardize or measure but are the essential building blocks for academic and social accomplishment and responsible citizenship.
4. There is little evidence that standards for young children lead to later success. The research is inconclusive; many countries with top-performing high-school students provide rich play-based, nonacademic experiences—not standardized instruction—until age six or seven.

Of the 135 people who wrote and reviewed the Common Core State Standards for the K-3 standards, not one was a K-3 classroom teacher or early childhood professional. “

Experts such as Education Professor Yong Zhao of the University of Oregon states, “As the U.S. is moving to MORE standardized testing, China and other Asian countries are moving away from standardized testing because it kills creativity and innovation.” He goes on to say “It should alert us that we are just starting on a

path that other countries are now leaving. They have realized what did not succeed and are moving on to find what does. We are not benefitting from their experience. “

Arne Duncan himself quoted on NPR’s Talk of The Nation on September 2, 2010 “And one thing I’m always conscious of is that the best ideas in education are always going to come at the local level, never from me, never from Washington.” Yet, here we are as a nation, faced with these curriculum standards which have been adopted at the national level.

Dr. Megan Koschnick gave a presentation September 9, 2013 in which she discussed how certain aspects of the Common Core standards are developmentally and age inappropriate. Heartland Institute’s Joy Pullman wrote: “Dr. Koschnick’s analysis makes it clear what other early childhood professionals have said: Common Core asks small children to behave like little adults, and they are not little adults. Anyone who cares for a small child could tell you this. This is a further consequence of the Common Core lead writers’ lack of experience and professional reputation, and of its committees excluding experts in early childhood.”

As parents of three young children attending Connecticut’s public schools, we are deeply concerned and even saddened to see the changes in what is expected of our children at such young ages. It is doing a disservice to our children, as well as children across the country. Students will soon begin the SBAC assessments, which will cause unnecessary stress and anxiety, with no benefit to anyone. It is well documented in research that young children learn best through play, yet with our current educational system there is no time for this important work of young children. Fred Rogers (a.k.a. Mr. Rogers) put it best when he stated: “Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”

Please take the time to research for yourselves why the Common Core State Standards and SBAC are not helping, but rather hurting our educational system. Proposed Bill 5078 does not address what truly needs to be addressed.

Therefore, we urge you to PLEASE adopt a bill that removes Connecticut from the SBAC/CCSS and return the control to local boards of education. We also ask that you adopt a bill that provides parents with the right to opt out of any standardized assessments.

We thank you for your consideration in these very important educational matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Testimony Concerning Proposed Bill No. 5331:**

As an educator in Connecticut, I am writing to you today to ask you to please repeal the current teacher evaluation system in Connecticut. The new teacher evaluation system that was implemented this year has taken away many hours of time I could be using to improve my instruction. Instead, I have spent countless hours writing lesson plans that must be written in a format that does not align with my actual teaching practices so that it “fits” into the current system. I have then spent more time “tagging evidence” into an online data “warehouse” that does NOTHING to improve my teaching. Please look at the “old” system that was successfully used in some districts and consider moving BACK to those evaluation standards. The current teacher evaluation system is cumbersome, time-consuming, and does NOT promote teacher growth, but rather hinders it.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Nagy-Maruschock